



## **TRANSITION PLAN For the Closure of Paul Robeson High School**

### **I. Introduction**

Chicago Public Schools (CPS) is committed to providing every child from every community with a high quality education that prepares them for success in college and in life. CPS students continue to make record-breaking academic progress in every part of the city. Our vision is that all CPS schools can build on this progress by offering high quality, rigorous instruction from talented educators that help put Chicago students on a path to lasting success.

Under-enrolled schools face challenges in providing a well-rounded education for their students, particularly in offering robust program options for students and recruiting staff. In turn, this makes it difficult to provide the high school experience that students deserve.

The Englewood community has recognized that these challenges are taking place in four existing neighborhood schools: Hope, Harper, Robeson and TEAM Englewood. Over the past 10 years, each of these schools have seen declines in enrollment of 70 to 85 percent, with current enrollment between 90 and 135 students at each school. At Paul Robeson High School ("Robeson"), 1,509 students were enrolled in the fall of 2006 while 128 students were enrolled in fall of 2017. The proposed closure of Robeson on December 1<sup>st</sup>, 2017 met the criteria of the Chief Executive Officer's Guidelines for School Actions ("Guidelines") because it is a proposal requested by community members. Specifically, we heard the request for this proposal from the Englewood Community Action Council and at a meeting of the Englewood Community Leadership Steering Committee in calendar year 2017.

Following the December 1st announcement, CPS continued an extensive community engagement process involving community meetings, parent meetings, a public hearing, and regular discussions with elected officials and the Englewood Steering Committee. Based on feedback, CPS will continue to move forward with the development of a new, state-of-the-art school at Robeson's site, but the district will delay the closure of Harper, Hope and TEAM over the next three years to allow students to finish high school at their current school.

### **II. Summary of Action**

Robeson is a neighborhood high school located at 6835 S. Normal Blvd. in the Englewood neighborhood and CPS' Network 11. Robeson currently serves 128 students in grades 9-12. The Chicago Board of Education voted on February 28<sup>th</sup>, 2018 to close Robeson High School at the end of this school year (school year 2017-2018), effective June 2018.

As a result of this action, all current students and families at Robeson will receive significant enrollment support to choose the school that they will attend in the following school year, based on their individual educational needs and priorities. As part of this process, every student will be given numerous options and individualized attention in order to attend a higher performing school based on the School Quality Rating Policy ("SQRP").

Chicago Public Schools has set aside \$8.3 million dollars over the next 3.5 years to support students from Harper, Hope, Robeson and TEAM Englewood. Under the revised plan, this funding will support



current students at Harper, Hope and TEAM in the form of program support funding to ensure core subjects are available and students can graduate with all required classes. The funding will also support all students from Robeson who are transferring to a new school through graduation.

For students who chose not to submit the transfer application, a neighborhood high school designation will be assigned. Starting in the fall of 2018, the northwestern portion (west of Racine Ave and north of 67th Street) of the geographic boundary currently assigned to Robeson will be assigned to Gage Park HS, the northeastern portion (east of Racine Ave and north of 67th Street) will be assigned to Phillips HS, the southeastern portion (east of Halsted St and south of 67th Street) will be assigned to Chicago Vocational HS, and the southwestern portion (west of Halsted and south of 67th Street) will be assigned to Bogan HS.

### ***Supports for Robeson Students:***

#### ***Transition Teams***

Under the original proposal, CPS allocated funds to hire additional staff to support students as they transition from their current school to a different school. Under the revised plan, Robeson will still benefit from the following positions:

- **Principal Transition Coordinator:** The Principal Transition Coordinator (“PTC”) will be responsible for overseeing the transition team and transition supports for current students from Robeson. The PTC will be responsible for holding all members of the transition team accountable for achieving key milestones along each student’s transition (i.e. choosing the school each student will transition to, preparing an academic plan and preparing a safety plan). The PTC will also be responsible for overseeing administrative needs such as transferring student records to students’ respective schools. In addition, the PTC will provide support to administrators and school staff at transition schools to ensure they are prepared to welcome transitioning students. Principal Transition Coordinators will be former or current CPS Principals. The PTC will be fully on-boarded by mid-March and will be primarily located at Robeson high school.
- **School-Based Transition Coordinator:** The School-Based Transition Coordinator (“SBTC”) will be the central point of contact for Robeson students and their families. In the spring of 2018, CPS will provide this additional staffing capacity to support current school counselors to meet with students to create individualized transition plans, including choosing a transition school, creating academic readiness plans and safety plans, as well as ensuring each student is supported by coordinating with staff at transition schools. The SBTC will be fully on-boarded by early April.
- **Student Outreach and Re-engagement Center (“SOAR”):** Before students transition to their new schools, CPS SOAR Center staff will play a role in supporting students who have dropped out, do not consistently attend school or are significantly behind in obtaining credits. They will be focused on supporting students in enrolling and attending a transition school. In the 2018-19 school year, the SOAR Center will follow up with all transitioning students from Robeson High School to track attendance and enrollment and ensure student engagement in learning. Early interventions will be identified for students who demonstrate disengagement.

#### ***General Supports for students and families***



Students from Robeson will receive a variety of supports to ensure they have access to high quality classroom academics, interventions for those struggling with literacy and math, counseling and social supports and student safety support. The goal will be to ensure that students and their families receive access to quality instruction, understand their rights, available school options and are safe and secure through the transition process.

### ***Supporting transitioning students at Robeson in choosing a school for the 2018-2019 school year***

To support students who choose to transfer, CPS will provide information on open seats and performance at CPS schools to support students in selecting their school.

#### ***Timeline for Supporting Transitioning Students***

- *Throughout March:* Provide all students at Robeson an opportunity to meet with a CPS staff member to discuss their options and filling out an application
- *Throughout March:* Hold meetings with parents from Robeson to learn about other high school options
- *[March 10th]:* Hold a High School Fair at Kennedy King College (9:00 AM-12:00 PM)
- *[By April 6th]:* Interested students submit their transfer preferences (up to 10 schools)
- *[By April 27th]* Students receive their enrollment options from the Office of Access and Enrollment
- *[By May 18th]:* Students submit their final choice
- *[By June 7th]* Finalize academic readiness plans to prepare for transition
- *[By June 7th]* Finalize safety plans to ensure students can travel safely to school next year
- *[By June 7th]* Provide academic student “resumes” to schools that students will transition to in the School Year 2018-2019

Students that choose to transfer will also be given the opportunity to meet with school staff at schools they transition to, including teachers, principals and coaches, prior to the beginning of the school year (e.g. over the summer).

#### ***Support for families***

CPS will host two parent meetings for parents of Robeson students in March 2018. Families who are looking for additional guidance on school options should attend one of these meetings. For families unable to attend a meeting, the Network office will conduct office hours to help families navigate the process. Please contact your Network for information.

- Email: [transitions@cps.edu](mailto:transitions@cps.edu)
- Phone number: 773-535-8230

In terms of additional supports, CPS will work with each school welcoming students from Robeson to create a plan to support transitioning students. The plan will include requested supports to ensure the academic and social-emotional well-being of all students. CPS will then provide funds



proportional to the number of transitioning students being welcomed at the school students transition to. These funds will be adjusted each semester based on the number of transitioning students present at each school in that semester. Each plan will include:

### ***Supporting student social-emotional needs***

CPS understands that whenever students transition into new situations and environments, additional support is needed to help them adjust. CPS and the Office of Social Emotional Learning ("OSEL") will consult with schools that receive transitioning Robeson students to evaluate existing SEL supports and determine additional resource needs for a school-specific plan. These plans may include the following:

- Establishing a climate & culture team to lead the planning of school-wide practices to promote positive relationships and a welcoming, supportive and trauma-sensitive school environment.
- Implementing restorative practices (such as talking circles and peer councils) to encourage peer-to-peer problem-solving and resolution.
- Developing behavioral health systems to identify when students have higher levels of social and emotional need, connect them to targeted interventions and track their progress to ensure success.
- Implementing targeted small group supports or circles aimed at helping students work through concerns associated with transition, as needed.
- Accessing social & emotional or trauma interventions for students in need of more individualized attention.
- Developing Student Leadership and Culture-Building Activities to ensure students feel welcome in schools they transition to.
- Ensuring continuity of existing mentorship programs (e.g. BAM and WOW) to serve students throughout the transition process.
- Providing professional development and training opportunities in trauma-sensitive practices, restorative practices, social emotional learning and other relevant topics to staff at schools that students transition to.

### ***Supporting student academic needs***

All students at Robeson will have the opportunity to engage in academic supports and after school employment during spring 2018 semester. Students will earn a stipend for weekly attendance. The Department of Instructional Supports and Network 11 worked together to provide opportunities for students to be able to take credit recovery courses so they can at least be on track for graduation.

After students choose their new school, the principal and school leadership team of the schools welcoming students will receive academic resumes on each transitioning student and determine how to best allocate additional district resources to support transitioning students. These supports could include:

- Academic remediation and intervention supports such as tutoring and credit recovery.
- Additional staffing to support students in classrooms.



- SAT prep sessions are also being offered for students who are interested in improving their chances for doing better in the SAT in the spring.

### ***Safety and Security***

The CPS Office of Safety & Security has engaged the Englewood community, including the Community Leadership Steering Committee, on transitioning student safety. The Office of Safety & Security will continue to work with Robeson and the Englewood community to ensure that appropriate safety and security plans are in place to support students that transfer. Safety supports discussed to date are included below. These supports may be further customized based on the feedback received. Additionally, resources may be adjusted to meet the unique needs of affected students (if deemed necessary).

- Review existing safe passage routes and adjust routes as appropriate based on an assessment of the schools where students will be transitioning to
- Partner with CTA to review potential staging of buses to facilitate safe and smooth dismissals
- Evaluate transportation support, including distribution of limited use CTA cards for transitioning students based on their individualized safety plans
- Review security staffing and adjust staffing as appropriate in schools where students will be transitioning to
- Evaluate security systems and technology in schools that students transition to

### ***Support for students with diverse learning needs***

Students with disabilities and their families will be supported in the transition process through clear communication, continual support for academic instruction and ensuring the schools that students transition to are fully able to implement student Individual Education Programs ("IEPs"). Students with disabilities, as with all students impacted by school actions, will receive intensive support to ensure their academic and social-emotional needs are met. Students with disabilities will also receive the following categories of support, adjustable to individual student/family needs:

Current students with disabilities will continue to receive the following supports, required by law:

- *A free and appropriate public education ("FAPE")*
- *The implementation of the student's IEP in the least restrictive environment ("LRE")*
- *A focus on student academic and social emotional progress*

In addition, to ensure that instructional quality is maintained, CPS will additionally provide the following support:

- *As students move through this process, a district representative from the Office of Diverse Learner Supports and Services ("ODLSS") will be assigned to students choosing to transition from Robeson. The district representative will work with families and students to ensure they are informed of their options and will support students as they transition to their new school for the 2018-2019 school year. Specifically the district representative will:*



- *Review all IEPs with the school students transition to ensure implementation and provide observations of classrooms when school has started and train staff on specialized equipment for specific student needs*

### ***Students in Temporary Living Situations***

- The CPS Office of Students in Temporary Living Situations will continue the supports currently provided to Students in Temporary Living Situations (“STLS”) as required by law. These include free school meals, enrollment support, provision of required school uniforms and school supplies as needed, transportation assistance when eligible, and waiver of all school related fees.
- Students in Temporary Living Situations will be encouraged to attend any events in which they can meet with school staff and/or learn about schools to transition to should they decide to transfer.
- For those students who had been homeless prior to the 2018-2019 school, their school of origin will become the first school they enroll in for the 2018-2019 school year.

### ***English Language Learners***

Current and future English Language Learners (“ELs”) will receive state mandated bilingual services (Transitional Bilingual Education (“TBE”) or Transitional Program of Instruction (“TPI”), as required. English as a Second Language (“ESL”) instruction provided by an ESL-endorsed teacher is part of both programs. Meaningful access to the core curriculum is provided to TBE students through native language instruction in the core content (language arts, math, science, and social studies). For TPI students, meaningful access to core curriculum is delivered through sheltered English content instruction and native language supports, based on the individual student’s need, and provided by appropriately endorsed (bilingual- or ESL-endorsed) teacher(s)

### ***Public Comment***

CPS held two community meetings and one formal public hearing regarding the proposed closure of Englewood High Schools. Public comment was accepted during each meeting or hearing and the transcripts can be found online at [cps.edu/transitions](http://cps.edu/transitions). The community meetings and public hearing were during the following dates and times:

#### **Community Meeting #1**

January 10<sup>th</sup>, 2018  
6:00-8:00 PM  
Kennedy King College  
740 W. 63<sup>rd</sup> St.

#### **Community Meeting #2**

January 17<sup>th</sup>, 2018  
6:00-8:00 PM  
Hamilton Park Fieldhouse  
513 W. 72<sup>nd</sup> St.

#### **Public Hearing # 1**

January 30<sup>th</sup>, 2018  
6:00-8:00 PM  
CPS Loop Office  
42 West Madison Street,  
Garden Level, Board Room

Further Questions and Concerns:

All of this information can be found at [CPS.edu/Transitions](http://CPS.edu/Transitions). If you have any questions or concerns regarding this transition plan, please call Chicago Public Schools at (773) 553-1500 or email [Transitions@cps.edu](mailto:Transitions@cps.edu).